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Opposing the Thunder Basin National Grassland Prairie Dog Amendment

Dec 22, 2013

U.S. Forest Service

Dear Supervisor Cruz, Service,

I strongly oppose amending the Thunder Basin National Grassland prairie dog plan to poison all prairie dog colonies on federal lands within 1/4 mile of private and state lands. Prairie dogs are native wildlife and essential to healthy populations of numerous other species. There are better non-lethal ways to manage prairie dogs where they border hostile neighboring lands. Continue to use vegetative barriers to deter prairie dogs from expanding onto neighboring lands, and when necessary, relocate prairie dog colonies from these boundary areas to fully protected areas far from private lands, as you are doing now in some locations.

Further, the proposed use of anticoagulant poisons on federal lands is completely unacceptable because they are also deadly to many other animals that eat the poisoned prairie dogs, including hawks, eagles, badgers, foxes and many more. They should never be used.

Finally, please comply with your obligation under the Endangered Species Act to promote the conservation and recovery of threatened and endangered species and move forward with plans to reintroduce the endangered black-footed ferret, a native species and important part of the prairie dog ecosystem, to these public lands. This is one of the best remaining habitats for the black-footed ferret, and the delays to their reintroduction here have gone on far too long. This is your opportunity to be part of an endangered species success story. As a part owner of these federal lands, I expect this obligation to be fulfilled.

Thank You,

Dr. Jon Cole

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